DESCRIPTION: Medieval men and women were captivated and amazed by images. This is because images have the potential of generating psychological, cognitive, and emotional responses while communicating social and cultural ideas and concerns. In recent years medieval images have generated excitement among modern art and cultural scholars who recognize their potential as “wordless” records of culture and windows into different medieval mentalities. By studying medieval images, in some cases as if they were modern ones, scholars attempt to understand medieval everyday life experiences, material culture, creation of identities, intellectual development, and even attitudes about the body and sexuality.

The purpose of this class is to explore medieval images within their cultural context in an attempt to: 1) understand how they were conceived and used to communicate the ideas and concerns of the period; 2) assess how they can be useful in reconstructing medieval experiences and perspectives; 3) recognize the difficulties of approaching images from other eras without the appropriate context and methodology; 4) gain a proper understanding of medieval history, art, and thought; and 5) question how medieval images continue to convey messages and construct identities even in our own lives. To this end we will place the images in their cultural and historical framework with the help of modern studies. For example, Jews, Muslims, and heretics were usually portrayed in medieval art in the Christian world as “monstrous figures.” To understand the construction of such imagery, the class will have to consider the role of the creators of such images, their audiences, their media, the current ideology, symbolic meaning, and the political, sacred, and secular context of the representations. The analysis of modern scholars and the discussions in class will help in putting all these concepts into play allowing us to view the images as windows into the medieval conception of the “Other.” Fortunately, the class will have the great opportunity to experience medieval images “first-hand” by visiting in Barcelona the world’s renown Romanesque and Gothic art collections of the MNAC (Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya), the Gothic Choirs from the Cathedral of Barcelona and the church of Santa Maria del Mar, the medieval sculpture collection of the Frederic Marès Museum, and the Cloister of the Monastery of Sant Pau del Camp.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
Information is presented in a variety of forms, providing different learning platforms.

- **Lectures and class discussions:** introduction of the different topics, presentation of methodologies proposed by different scholars, promotion of discussion to share different points of view and foster student participation, development of tools for critical thinking.
- **Readings:** selected articles and chapters from books that present different approaches and case studies of medieval visual arts and their images.
- **Homework assignments:** will be based on the reading for a particular session and aim to help the student identify the key points of the readings and facilitate discussion during class. They are due at the beginning of class.
- **Class activities:** Consists of class discussion (whole class and in small groups), presentations (by each student and by small groups), and course-related trips to museums and medieval monuments. With these activities students will be able to communicate their ideas to each other and to the professor.
- **Course-related trips:** will allow the students to visit important medieval landmarks in Barcelona and to apply, first hand, the techniques learnt in class to the materials studied.
- **Moodle:** will be used throughout the course both as a repository for course materials and as a platform for students to undertake interactive learning activities.
REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
The final grade will be determined as follows:

- **Class participation (15%)**: Class participation is crucial in this course. By participating in the discussion students can express their points of view about the readings and lectures. The participation also helps the professor assess the degree of implication, understanding of materials, and knowledge about the subject.
- **Term Paper (15%)**: 3,000 word research paper on one of the principal topics of the semester, drawing on a range of approved academic sources.
- **Midterm exam (25%)**: Written exam where the students will have to explain different methodologies studied in class, and conduct a recognition, description, and analysis of several images within their medieval historical and cultural context.
- **Topic presentations (20%)**: Analysis and presentation of images. Creation and presentation of an iconographical program for an imaginary church or cathedral. With this activity students will have to review all concepts seen during the semester and compile and ensemble a series of medieval images that could have been devised and used by a medieval “iconographic programmer” to send a message in the context of a Romanesque church or a Gothic cathedral. The activity will show the professor how much the students have assimilated the information presented and how they have developed their own approaches and personal points of view about the communicative potential of medieval images.
- **Final exam (25%)**: Short essays about topics explored during the second half of the semester. In the final exam the students will prove their understanding of concepts and methodologies explored throughout the semester and their acquisition of tools for critical thinking within a historical context.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify medieval visual arts within an expressive, functional, geographical, and historical context.
- Explain the communicative role of images in medieval culture.
- Identify different theories and methodologies proposed in the understanding of medieval art and images.
- Analyze and describe medieval images from a multidisciplinary perspective taking into consideration their creators, their audiences, the chosen media, and the cultural precepts that allow them to affect and communicate ideas.
- Explain medieval history, contexts and mentalities.
- Find bridges between the use of medieval images and our modern conception of images and assess how medieval images continue to work in our imagination.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance is mandatory for all IES Abroad classes, including course-related trips. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than three classes in any course 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven absences in any course will result in a failing grade.

CONTENT:
Course Organization
The whole course is organized in two main sections:

The first one (sessions 1-12) approaches the development and functionality of images in medieval culture taking into consideration contemporaneous theories about aesthetics, rhetoric, cognition, memory, textuality, and allegory. The performative element represented by gesticulation and the use of figurative representations as both depictions of reality and symbols for the beyond also will be discussed during this section.

The second section (sessions 13-24) explores how medieval society and culture are mirrored in their images and how images can be great sources of information about medieval experiences, concerns, and ideas. Intellectual thought, the creation of history and identity, power, the role of women in society, the construction of the “Other”, and material culture will be analyzed through specific case studies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Forming “The Period Eye:” The art work as a product of its cultural context (Michael Baxandall)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Evolution of art and images in parallel with that of the material and cultural structures of society - The development of images as forms of mediation, edification, and affirmation of power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Images responding to the creation of the European “landscape” in the 12th and 13th centuries - Art, images, and a profane new world</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Medieval theorists and their concepts of art - Aesthetics and image creation in Romanesque art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- The mnemonic use of images - Images and meditation - Iconographical programs as encyclopaedias</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Physical and metaphysical beauty - The focus on proportion - Medieval tendency of understanding the world in terms of symbols and allegory - Biblical typology</td>
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<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Rhetoric and art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Student presentations of three images from the MNAC (captured by the Students) applying the concepts and methodologies</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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| Session 13 | Images as Historical Evidence:  
- Images and History  
|---|---|---|
| Session 14 | Image as a Reflection of Intellectual Thought  
**Topics:**  
- Panofsky and his Iconographical and Iconological Analysis  
- The importance of the intellectual context  
| Session 15 | Art in its Social Context  
**Topics:**  
- Culture and society as primary actors in medieval art  
- The terrestrial representing the beyond  
| Session 16 | Secular Life and The Image  
**Topics:**  
- Images in Gothic Art  
- Representation of Secular Life  
- Images and naturalism  
| Session 17 | Representations of Women I  
**Topics:**  
- Medieval attitude toward women  
- Women, the naked body, and Luxuria  
| Session 18 | Representations of Women II  
**Topics:**  
- Images used to construct the female body as an object of view  
- Oversexuality  
- Sirens  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 19</th>
<th>Antisemitism in Medieval Art I</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- The altercation between Church and Synagogue  &lt;br&gt; - The witnesses of the ancient law</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 20</th>
<th>Antisemitism in Medieval Art II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Extravagant hyper-visibility of the Jews in art  &lt;br&gt; - Separation of Jews and Christians</td>
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<th>Session 21</th>
<th>Creating the Other I</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- Defining the “Other”  &lt;br&gt; - Images and the creation of the European identity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 22</th>
<th>Creating the Other II and course-related trip to the Cathedral of Barcelona.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topics:</td>
<td>- The “monster races”  &lt;br&gt; - The medieval monster as a hybrid  &lt;br&gt; - The monster as identity (Wilfrid the Hairy)</td>
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<th>Session 23</th>
<th>Student presentations I</th>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed Topics:</td>
<td>- Creation of an “Iconographical Program” for a Romanesque Church (painting) or for a Gothic Cathedral (sculpture)</td>
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<td>References and images to be researched by students.</td>
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<th>Session 24</th>
<th>Student presentations II</th>
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<td>Proposed Topics:</td>
<td>- Creation of an “Iconographical Program” for a Romanesque Church (painting) or for a Gothic Cathedral (sculpture)</td>
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Final Exam
COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:
- Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya (MNAC): Romanesque and Gothic Art. The Collection of Romanesque wall painting is the most important in the world.
- Museu Frederic Marès: Important collection of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture.
- Cathedral of Barcelona: Gothic choir and iconographal programs placed on the portals.
- Church of Santa Maria del Mar: Gothic Choir and other iconographical elements in the chapels and main portal.
- Monastery of Sant Pau del Camp: Iconographical program on the capitals of the Romanesque cloister.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Global brilliance begins here.
Institute for the International Education of Students
Africa | Asia Pacific | Europe | Latin America
RECOMMENDED READINGS:


